

ORAL HISTORY TRANSCRIPT

SUBJECT: FATHER THOMAS FAHEY, Pastor of Holy Trinity
Church (Catholic)

DATE: February 09, 1990

PLACE: Conference room at new Rectory of Holy
Trinity Catholic Church at 1836 Hot Springs
St. in Cheyenne

INTERVIEWER: Mark Junge

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TF: We are the new Rectory at Holy Trinity Catholic Church ,
Cheyenne Wyoming. And it's .. the address is 1836 Hot
Springs, Cheyenne Wy.

MJ: What room is this?

TF: This is a conference room. And ..

MJ: Many important conferences are held here.

TF: Yes (laugh), the Pastor reigns as King in here (laugh).

MJ: I have here.

TF: Oh that is a picture of my parents. Well now, hell. How
did you find that? (laugh)

MJ: Betty Griffith gave me some pictures.

TF: He did! Well God, Heaven's above! (laugh)

MJ: Can you read that for me? And pronounce everything the way it should be pronounced.

TF: Oh, dear God. Apart from modern migrants to the largest city, to the larger cities, it can be said that Fahey (long a sound). well, now of course, the way they pronounced Fahey (long a sound), as Fahey (short a sound) and know they say Fahey (long a sound). Where here they say Fahey (long a sound).

MJ: Can, does anybody pronounce your name correctly?

TF: No - No.

MJ: Fahey (short a sound) would be.

TF: Fahey (short a sound). Is almost exclusively a culty-balway name. Though of course, it is also to be found in the areas boudering that counties that is not tipperary. Except on Umane (short a sound), Umane (long a sound), the center of the patromonie. Which they held at proprietors up to the time of the Crimilian upheavel. And when most of them still the while is lock gray. Their territory was known as Pobble Wencharkalfrahey. Which means the country inhabitent by and belonging to the Fahey's (short a sound). And this Fahey (short a sound)

homeland, there is a place the modern name of which is
Fahey (long a sound) Village. Fahey (long a sound)

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or Fahey (short a sound) in Irish. Well, what do you know?
That's news to me (laugh). Where the heck did you find this!

Huh?

countermark 2:04

MJ: Betty Griffith, came up with this.

TF: She did?

MJ: Yes, she did.

TF: Oh, goodness - women. (laugh)

MJ: See they've got you nailed now and they've got some things
on you that you don't even know about.

TH: That's right ... (mumbling). There, see, that's surprised me to tell you the truth because they were in contact when I celebrated my fortieth. They were in contact with my sisters

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back in Ireland. And this is how they got some of this - stuff. I would never give them this (laugh). No, I would not! But they were back to my sisters and got alot of this information. Yes, we still have an awful father here, he was so disgusted looking (laugh). And this was a O'Fahey, what do you call it?

MJ: Crest?

TF: Crest, yea. I really don't know what it means.

MJ: Was the O'Fahey family, was it royalty in Ireland?

TF: No, no, no. You know, when I was growing up as a kid. My father would tell us all these things, you know. Of course, I wasn't going to be interested. Just like a kid, I was going to play ball, you know. But he had all this history, you know. And now I wished, later on, I wished that I would have listened to him when he was telling us these things. And I, see that's a good idea, if we got, if we had that at that time we probably would treasure that now.

MJ: I'm sure you would.

TF: Yea.

MJ: This is the date of your birth here on your informations sheet - this life essentials questionair you have as October. But what is the exact date? No! No! I take that back.

TF: December

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MJ: Decemeber 6, 1919.

TF: Yes.

MJ: O'kay, the date you arrived in Wyoming was, ah, October 1947.

TF: Yah, O'kay.

MJ: O'kay, what were your parents names?

TF: Junes and Nora, Nora Fahey or Nora Nighland. Nora Nighland.

MJ: What were their back grounds? Have they always been in Ireland?

TF: Yah, there were always, they were. Yes, their from neighboring parishes. They went to the same parish, but they were neighboring parishes. And they were both from farming stock. They were what you might say, country people.

MJ: Now in Ireland, the parish is like a county here?

TF: Yah, yah it, . . . no. A parish in Ireland is more like here like down in Lousiana, a parish, I think, is a county. That wasn't the way. A parish was a, we had the counties too you see. We have it here a county Galway. A county Galway

was, would be like a would be more like a, yah, like Laramie county here. And then the county would be broken up into parishes.

MJ: So, but they weren't cities?

TF: No.

MJ: The cities were something, then again, the cities were

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something besides.

TF: Yah.

MJ: O'kay.

TF: You had county Galway. You have Galway city, which is, about the size of our Cheyenne, actually is about the same size as Galway city. But then you have Galway county all around it and it would be just like Laramie county.

MJ: That was farming country then, Galway county?

TF: Yes, most of it was farming country some of it was pretty poor.

MJ: What did they raise.

TF: It was Galway county is on the sea coast. It's on the it's next . . . President Kennedy he visited Galway when he was over there. And he got up on the platform he said, " I can see Boston!" (laugh). I can see Boston, and he named all the names in Boston, the Irish names, you know that were in Boston and they gave him a great cheer. Oh, that was great, you know. When he says, "I look down, I look across the ocean and

I see Boston." So Galway is just on the seaboard on the sea coast. And at one time, the transatlantic liners big ships used to come quite close there. Never coming all the way but they had a small tender, as they called it, which took the people out to their liner. But it's farming, it's a farming county.

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Ireland is mostly agriculture. (countermark 8:45)

MJ: No fishing then in that area?

TF: There is some fishing . . . yah. Yah, there is fishing.

MJ: But traditionally, your family were farmers.

TF: My farmers. We were good bit in from the sea really, we. .
. well the ocean came in the nearest part, I would say, would be about seven miles from the Atlantic Ocean.

MJ: But you were more familiar with rural country life then you were with the sea coast.

TF: Yes, we had nothing really any purpose with the sea. No.

MJ: I was curious, do you suppose that your, your a gardener and there's been articles in the paper written about you as a gardener here in Cheyenne. Do you suppose some of that comes from your farming background?

TF: It probably does. I like, even though I was small fella . .
. about ten or eleven years old. I remember one time when I came home from school there was a package for me. . . came in the mail. And I was so delighted to get, you know, a

kid getting a package in the mail and it was from my uncle in London. And it was a package of garden seeds . . . seeds of flowers and vegetables. And so I couldn't get out soon enough to plant them. To plant those seeds. Those vegetables

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and ever since then, you know, I have in interest in gardening. And of course, we were farmers. My father was a farmer.

MJ: You were the oldest?

TF: I was the oldest.

MJ: Of nine children.

TF: Nine children .

MJ: But one brother passed away?

TF: Yah.

MJ: At birth?

TF: Yah . . . no, he was about nine months old.

MJ: Was it croup or something else?

TF: Yah, he had pneumonia.

MJ: Yah, yah people, they didn't have much to deal . . . they couldn't deal with it very easily.

TF: No . . . I remember, he died at home. But the Doctor would come, you know, and look at him. But they couldn't do anything about it.

MJ: Where your parents pretty happy with their situation? Here they had, after your brother died, had four girls - four boys. People to help do the housework, kids to help do the housework, kids to help till the fields. I mean, your father

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must of been satisfied man.

TF: He was, he was a . . . we were very happy! And we had no telephone, no television, no washing machine or we had just an open fireplace. And all the heat was provided by peat. We used to cut the peat the "tuff" we called it. (countermark 11:14)

MJ: You used to have to cut peat?

TF: Yah.

MJ: How do you do that? I mean is it . . . coal?

TF: I never did it but my father did. Yes, they had what they called the "bogs". And you just . . . you don't have to dig down. It's on the surface. And they have a special spad or a shlim. . . they call it a shlim. And dig down and dig up the sod , the sod was a tuff.

MJ: This was like earth then.

TF: Yah, it usually was very soft and wet. He toss it up. . . he dig it out and toss to another man who caught it in his hands. And put it in a wheel-barrel. And carried it a short

distance away and spread. . . put it on the ground so it would dry. So when the tuff was cut, peat, it was wet and soggy so it had to dry. So we left it there for maybe a couple of months.

MJ: Did it burn wet?

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TF: Oh, yes . . . it burned very well.

MJ: This is burning dirt but it's not quite dirt.

TF: It's a . . . well it's decayed vegetation. . . well packed.

MJ: O'kay.

TF: It's a . . . sometimes you come across the roots of trees, you come along and find roots of trees and . . . it's hard work digging it because it's wet and heavy. . . soggy. But they cut the tuff around in the month of May. That's a great time, you know, they get together, you know, and help each other and they celebrate and have alot of fun doing it.

MJ: Do you remember some of the holidays . . . in Ireland?

TF: Yah, I do . . . We had, you know, we played a game of huddeling. You ever heard of huddeling, you know?

MJ: I understand you were a hurler?

TF: I was.

MJ: And I don't know what that is.

TF: I was a pretty good one too (laugh).

MJ: I see! I see by the records here you were pretty good.

TF: Well, I'll tell you something else too that I won, and now I'm not bosting, but I won in highschool, in the highschool weight throwing championship . . . for the pro-pump shot. It was off shoulder, I would be all Ireland championship.

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MJ: All Ireland?

TF: Yah, in 1938. That's a fact, I did it!

MJ: Has that record been broken?

TF: It sure has. . . oh, yes. Matter of fact, I didn't even break the record at that day. And which was the best throw that day.

MJ: You have to be pretty strong to throw this.

TF: Well. . . it was best of that year or that particular year 1938. I throw it for same year, you see, all the colleges well we called them colleges but they were highschools. We would-there would be equivalent to highschools here. And so they were represented in Dublin, and for the national championships. And I won the weight throwing and I got a medal for that . . . an all Ireland medal.

MJ: Well, that's great!

TF: I can show you that medal. (laugh)

MJ: I would like to take a look at that plus some of the other medals you've won. I know that's not the only one. When you hurl something then it's like the shot-put?

TF: No, this was the shot-put, a 12 pound shot-put.

MJ: Yes, that I word (note** unclear on sentence)

TF: Now the hurling is more like field hockey, you have a stik.

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MJ: Like lacross?

TF: Yah . . . I think . . . I'm not exactly sure what lacross is but

MJ: They have a net on the end of a stick.

TF: No, there's no net. Well I have a stick. I have a hockey stick.

MJ: It's like a hockey stick.

TF: With a probe, you see, and a handle. And a small ball is, it's like a tennis ball, but it has a leather cover on it.

MJ: It's hard.

TF: It's hard, oh it's very hard. And we call it the "shlicker", the shlicker, that is an Irish word - shlicker. And . . . but there would be fifteen men on a team. And there would be fifteen on the opposing team. So, the idea was that the full length hockey field was 160 yards long, 160 yards by 80 or 90, so it was a big field. But there would be thirty men

on the field. And they wouldn't all follow the ball like here, you had a particular part in the play. The goal keeper always stayed at the goal, it was something like soccer, you know. You see, they keep their places.

MJ: Sure.

TF: And. . . you move around abit but you usually you were

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assigned a particular place to play.

MJ: What was your position?

TF: I was put in central half-back. Central half-back, I mean that's Greek to you know but to an Irishmen